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MIDHIR & ETAIN

BY MÓIRÍN A CHEAVASA



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MIDHIR AND ETAIN

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BY

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MIDHIR AND ETAIN.

PART I.

IN TIR NA MBEO.

Night filled the chamber of Etain. Afar
Low voices of the waves and whispering foam
Stole through the gloom, and round her couch the
wind

Lingered and told deep-hidden strange sea secrets.
The salt scent of wide empty spaces, mixed
With honey fragrance of the mountain side,
Came wandering o'er the rich embroideries,
The silken covers and the carven gold
Wrought into strange device unknown to men
By her immortal lover, Midhir the proud.
Not all the beauty of that hidden land,
Land of the Living Heart, The Joyous Plain,
The Land of Hearts' Desire, could give her rest,
For through her dreams a breath of doom had blown

And brought the sorrow of this mortal world
And withering touch of death upon her soul.
The pulse of night beat close upon the dawn
When from her couch she rose and moved to where
Her casement looked upon the stars and sea
And mountains dark beneath the lamp of morn.
And now the words broke in a bitter tide
From lips until that hour no grief had marred,
And salt tears slowly fell from eyes undimmed
By sorrow through gold-winged eternities :

“Farewell O Love and Life and Light and Joy.”
Grief held her voice, and answering from the sea
Arose the thunder of three mighty waves
That shook the strand and broke in gleaming fire
And foam and filled the night with sound and slow
Withdrew in sorrowing whispers to the deep.
She stretched forth longing hands and spoke again :

“Farewell also Horses of Manannán,
Glistening, swift and untameable steeds,
Tossing your storm white crests on the wave top
Plunge through the surge of the sorrowless seas,
Fierce and exultant, wild-eyed and terrible,

How may I live bereft of your beauty
In sorrowful dúns by a desolate strand
And the mournful breaking of alien seas ? ”
She ended, and behind a flame] rose-red
Burned through the gloom and the God Midhir
spoke :

“ The lone sea bird whose vain white wings are
caught

Within the icy storm-blast, when the waves
Leap foaming to the tempest-driven snow,
Sends one lost cry for pity ere the sea
Breaks o'er its fluttering wings. As vain, beloved,
Our cries are raised against the Silent Powers
Who even from us the immortal Gods are hidden,
Ever unvanquished, unapproached, unmoved.
Let not thy cry arise like the sea bird's,
Not by the limitless night-storm art thou driven—
Years of less number than man's life are set
As bounds unto thy doom. Beloved 'twill be
One moment's tarrying in the land of death.”
But breaking from his arms she cried anew :
“ A moment's tarrying ? Nay, that moment's space

To me will seem the measure of heavy years.
This night a wind of bitter knowledge blew,
Of bitter knowledge and more bitter loss—
Already as some half-forgotten dream
Seems all the timeless beauty of this land :
I sink in swirling darkness to a stream
Ever returning to itself again,
Where all the worlds are tossed like fallen leaves
And death lies as a heavy mist above.
O Midhir I have lost immortal youth,
I fall from life to unknown chasms of death.”
Towards the wall, wild with her grief, she turned,
Beat with blind hands against the carven wood
Unmindful of her lover, shaken with sobs
Deep drawn and painful, as of one unused
To the destroying passion of helpless grief.
Then Midhir bent to her and on his breast,
Flame-hearted as the dawn, pillowed her head,
That shining torch of joy in Tir-na-nOg,
Whence all her golden tresses drooped and fell
A glimmering radiance to the glimmering floor.
Grief stricken yet knowing sorrow all in vain

He bent his head in silence o'er her tears,
Till on her sobbing breath words broke anew :
“ Is there no way I may escape this doom ?
How have I fallen in their hands, dark Lords
Of Life and Fate ?—uncraved for life by me.
No choice was mine, yet to the uttermost end
Of doom they drive me as the tortured wave
Is lashed by tempests and on iron crags
And pitiless bleak shores is broken and lost.
Lies their no little world beyond their power ?
No island in dim seas ? ” But Midhir gazed
Into the whitening dawn and heard without
Footsteps of Fuamach and Bresal, who
Through all the night with dark Formorian powers
Had raised up mighty spells against Etain,
Weak instruments of Fate. Then as she moaned
“ And thou, my lover and the Lord of Love,
Hast thou no help, no grief ? ” “ Such grief is mine,”
He answered, “ that the world of Love grows sad
Amid its joy, and sorrow clouds the hearts
Of all who love. Help have I won, beloved
For doom itself must yield thee when I call ;

No death shall ever sully thee, for I
Come ere the measure of thy years is past
And bring thee back to an immortal life,
Crowned with the threefold crown of love, and wise
With knowledge that can hold the hands of Fate.”
Uncomforted she sighed: “Behold the chasm
Time throws between thy triumph and my grief:
And death, the death from thee and all this life,
Nears unassailed. Then I may cry aloud,
Thou wilt not answer—as the songs of spring
Are to a withered leaf beneath the mould
Soon will thy love and glory be to me.”

Gold flamed into the sky and the sun rose,
But still upon her couch Etain lay
Comfortless, till at eve she passed to where
The golden threshold faced the coming night.
Then came that wind of Fate upon Etain
That drove her from the Ever Living Land
To where amid death and the night of pain
We dwell and dream of an immortal world.
For seven years upon that pitiless wind

In anguish she was driven, nor could she win
Back to the life of Gods, nor would she yield
Unto her doom, and take a mortal form.
For seven years her day of freedom fled
Before her eyes, till her strong will was broken
And in the power of fate she cast her soul.
Then was she born as daughter to Etar,
And grew more lovely than the winds of spring,
And wedded Eochaid Feidlech, the Ard-Ri.

PART II.

THE FEIS OF TARA.

(I.) THE EVE OF THE FEIS.

It was the eve of the great Feis at Tara
Red firelight flamed within the Ard-Righ's dún,
But the Ard-Rioghan Etain left the flames
Leaping upon the hearthstone and the King
Who fain had stayed her yet who feared to grieve,
And solitary gazed out across the plain,
A desolate passion in her sombre eyes.

As darkness fell yet wrought no change in her
The High King rose and moving to her side
Whispered "Beloved, the night falls, too long
The darkness fills thine eyes, come back to me."
"Less dark," she said, "within the starless night
Than in the torch-light of the dún, for here
My soul knows some faint radiance, quenched
where stand
The flaring torches. I have passed so far

So far from thee O Eochaid that thy voice
Echoes but faintly down through my deep night.
How may I then return?" And he "Since once
When with the blossoming of the world I rode
And found thee standing by the river marge
And thou didst lift that sweet and tragic face
The blossom of my life, not once or twice
Hast thou gone from me down those secret ways
Of grief and darkness—ay, that summer's eve
When Eire's queens and kings and chiefs came forth
Blazing in festal robes to welcome thee
And the deep skies flamed in such crimson and gold
That all men stood amazed, ay, even that eve
Thy sorrowful wild eyes quenched all our joy
And filled us with strange fears. Yet ever thou
Hast loosened grief from thee and hast returned
With but that nameless shadow that enshrouds
Thy fiery spirit, therefore come now beloved."
But wringing her frail hands she cried: "O cease,
Speak not to me of that most bitter day
When the child's sorrow and desire, the sad
Sweet lingering pain of half forgotten things,

Brake into tempest, for a Face had looked
In through my dreams and peace was gone from me.
O leave me with the grief thou canst not heal
For I would seek the help of the High Gods."
And sorrowfully the Ard-Ri returned
Unto his place and passing the Arch Druid
Said to him: "Comfort the Queen for I may not."
Then from his seat the Arch Druid rose and moved
Towards her and for a space stood silent till
She turned and said half brokenly: "O thou
To whom the Gods have spoken, speak to me.
I may no more endure, give me some aid."
"O Queen," he answered, "vainly have I striven
By prayer and sacrifice, by nights and days
Of fasting, and yet never have I won
Knowledge of thee or of thy doom from them.
For lo! the Gods have veiled thee from mine eyes."
With sudden passion she cried: "Is there no end
To this drear sorrow that no love can heal,
No Druid spells can vanquish? In my soul
A limitless hunger deepens—grief to me
Is the high light of noon and I may gaze

No longer where the terrible silent stars
Are scattered down the midnight steep of heaven,
For whispers of a beauty that is death
That is an unquenched flame, that is desire,
Anguish, despair, break on my heart and hurl
All things to ruin, Knowest thou no end ? ”
And he : “ Thy doom is hidden from me : I know
Only this thing, that in thy grief is life,
With peace comes death.” “ Were peace too dearly
bought ? ”

She questioned bitterly. “ What profit to live
To suffer more ? Why should I wreck all joy
For this unending pain ? ” And turned from him.

Then to her side there stole a youth who said :
“ Lady, I heard a song blown on the winds—
Wilt thou not hear it ? ” Listlessly she spoke :
“ Ay, sing it to me,” and she slowly moved
Unto her seat and there, head propt on hand,
She hearkened, all unheeding, to his voice
The while o’er desolate wastes her spirit strayed.
But joyously he sang, a song of night
And fragrant winds blowing from the hushed dark :

The leaping flames danced to it, and without
A wind that answered it arose, and faint
Far eries and tramplings and the clash of arms
Music and laughter came borne on the wind ;
Yet still she sat unmoved, uncomforted.

But last when some wild strange unhuman passion
Broke through the song, within her eyes awoke
A fierce death-stricken terror and she rose
Crying aloud : "Cease! Cease!" and would have fled
But ere she moved two paces failed and swooned.

Within her grianán they laid the Queen
And all the night beside her the Ard-Ri
Sat watching, but no word she spoke nor once
Gazed on familiar faces. Sorrowing
Her maidens stood, all hushed as with the fear
Of death, for motionless she lay and death
Verily stood within and slowly drew
More near and yet more near : but not that death
They knew of. Utterly dark, forsaken, lost
Her soul sank towards its end, for hope
Had gone from her and now the will to strive
Weakened into an effortless despair ;

Till crying unto her soul : " Let me lose all
So I win peace," she ceased from her long strife
And through the frozen terror of the dark
Before the winds of death engulfed her soul
Knew a voice spake : " Lose all for this one day."

But to the silent watchers came no sign
Of travail or strife nor did her eyes uncloze :
So the drear midnight hours flowed on and passed.

When some far presage of the day was blown
On a faint voiceless wind around the world,
Though still the druid stars shone in cold skies
Unbroken of dawn, Eochaid arose and passed
Beyond the dún seeking the Gods of Night
And the swift Gods of Dawn and all his heart
Went out to them in a blind passionate cry
To the end his grief and hers—vain hope, for they
Had that same hour laid resistless hands
Upon his life and shadows of a loss
Vaster than he had dreamed of rose with dawn.
But from the silence peace crept to his heart
And long he prayed, and when with dawn there came
A strange swift whisper fleeing from that far place

Where dwell the Unseen Powers and life and death
Are but a shadow blown across the skies,
It seems to him the Gods had passed him by
And that their breath had lifted grief from him.
Then back through the white lingering mists he
turned

Towards Tara of the Kings, for day had come
Hastening before him to the silent dún,
And as the King drew near a spear point gleamed
Red stricken by the sun at the great door
Bronze studded, bright with carven silver and gold
That closed Etain's grianán, were paced
All night armed warriors, champions of the host.

Sudden a cry was heard within the dún
"Open the door, the Queen comes forth," and slow
Though grasped in hands that wielded iron swords
The door swung back and forth towards the plain
White as the paling stars Etain passed
Till that full glory of the rising sun
Smote like a ruddy flame the loosened gold
Of all her drooping hair and in his light
She stood, as though from an immortal world

A moment's space she tarried. The Ard-Ri
Silent with fear and doubt and joy still paused
Within the dún's deep shadow till she turned
From the dawn's glory and within her eyes
Faded the radiance of that unknown life
And in them shone sweet earthly loveliness
That all the eternal winds leave unassailed.
Stretching exultant hands to him she cried :
" I have arisen from my death-in-life
And all the clouds of grief have passed from me.
Those bitter memories of some unknown joy
That like the bands of frost bound up my soul
Are broken and are fallen—all the joy
Of all the singing streams brims up my soul,
And my desires that once as eagles winged
The vast and melancholy wastes of air
Shall fly like homing doves into my breast.
And I shall know beauty that is more sweet
For its brief lastingness, and human love
That is content and joyous, and the skies
Of morn and eve shall fill my heart with peace,
Desire fulfilled, hope like a gentle lure

To make the night more sweet with thoughts of dawn.

Come forth with me, I am as one new born
And I would throw my joy on all the winds."
And when he spoke: "Beloved let our praise
Be given unto Midhir, Lord of Love,
Even now I prayed Him by the quenchless fire
Within His heart to heal our love from sorrow
And lo! 'tis done." She cried again: "Nay, nay,
Forget O Eochaid, all past grief; behold
Life dawns on us to-day and night and pain
Are gone like spectres fleeing from the sun.
Let us not think on hours that are as leaves
Withered and shapeless that the winds of spring
Drive from their hidden lairs, when all the fields
Snow-laden with earliest blossoms call to the sun.
Come while the dawn yet lingers, for day will bring
The heaviness of rule, kingship and noon.
For us this hour of the dawn, untrammelled and
winged."

"Bring forth my chariot," cried Eochaid, "Stal-
ions yoke

White as spring blossoms beneath the swaying pole.
Let the Feis wait us, for the dawn is ours."

Then as the torrent leaps snow-white in the sun
Falling from rock to rock into golden pools
So from the rath and the spears of the guarding
host

They passed and vanished into the mists of dawn.

(II.) THE DAY OF THE FEIS.

Now when the red hand of the sun was hidden
Behind his golden shield, all roads were thronged
That led to Tara. Here passed some mighty prince
Tall and gold-bearded, of proud Milesian kin;
And here dark, sinewy, silent, unknowable,
A Firbolg chieftain; there a man who sought
Eric and justice. Merchants and bards rode by,
Throned in bronze chariots the warriors passed,
While the gay laughter of youths and maidens rose,
And lo! like spring winds through the gates of Tara

Etain and Eochaid, greeting the Kings of Eirinn
The warriors, the merchants, and the bards,
And from unclouded skies the sun shone down
Upon the shields of kings and warrior-swords
And smote flame colours in the festal robes
Of Druids, lit the passionate eyes of bards
Whom a song's birth made equal with the Gods,
Flashed on their harp strings, on the jewelled hair
Of maidens, on the cathbars of great queens
Fierce-eyed, leaders of armed hosts, and all the Feis
Rejoiced in Eochaid's joy and in Etain's

With the long shades of evening, from the plain
Came in an unknown bard who strode in haste
To where there sat apart from all the throng
The mightiest Druids in their carven chairs.
"Ye Masters of the Secret Winds of God,"
He stood and cried to them: "I seek Etain."
Lifting deep eyes on him spoke the Arch Druid:
"Why seekest thou Etain?" and he replied:
"Knowledge have ye O Druid of the Queen
Unknown of all men, and yet learned by me
Once when through forest pines she passed, a child

Whose years scarce numbered seven. Hidden I
stood

And watched her move between the dark straight
boles

Even as sunlight glances through the dusk

They keep by noon and night inviolate.

I saw the light of an immortal world

Shine round her through the gloom and by that
light

I knew there passed a God in mortal form.

Ay, and that light has shone through all my days

And with undying beauty touched the world.

Oft as I prayed towards the rising sun

Desire wakened in me to behold

And worship her, yet hither came I not

Until a sign was given me from the Gods.

Lo ! for two nights over the darkened hills

Beneath the silent stars a wind has blown

And on that wind the Horses of the Sidhe

Have passed me thrice, and twain by twain they
rode

And one horse riderless. On the third night

My soul shall ride with them beyond the world ;
Therefore I came." Then answered the Arch Druid:
"Late comest thou—yet it may be thine eyes
Clear by approach to that Immortal Land
May see what only to our hearts is known.
Let one go with him to Etain." Then rose
A younger Druid and through the joyous throngs
Led him to where before Etain a bard
Sang how the sons of Miled came from lands
Far east and wrested Eire from the Gods.

Leaning on their great spears the warriors
stood

Around their Kings whose fierce and untamed eyes
Lightened with battle-fury while their hands
Grasped where they sat about the Ard-Righ's throne
Their mighty sword hilts as the ancient tale
Flashed like a fiery torrent through their blood.
——How Eire had been holden of the Gods
Inviolatè, apart, the Sacred Land,
Till Sons of Miled, Son of that dread God
Bel the Unmanifest, their father's came,
Whose Godlike wisdom by the Gods was proven

Upon nine foaming waves and who o'ercame
By claiming aid from their great Foes themselves,
Brigid the Hidden Fire, and Manannán
Lord of the Sea—how, when their feet were set
Among the Hills of Eirinn, those same Gods
Opposed them till their mightiness of heart
Was proven on the crashing ridge of war
Worthy of this White Island of the Gods,
The Isle of Destiny.

“Behold the Queen,”

Spake then the Druid, but that unknown bard
Stared at her as he stares who hastening on
To some sweet trysting place meets suddenly
His love's pale wraith, until the Druid spoke :
“Seest thou not the Queen?” Then turned the
bard

Crying : “The Queen? truly I see the Queen.
I see not whom I sought,” and would have fled
Moaning : “Would I were blind and that my
strength

Were as the withered grass, never had I
Come hither nor beheld her. Mortal is she.”

But even as he spoke the Lord of Love

Midhir of the Red Heart of Flame, drew near.
Unseen he passed through warriors and kings
Till in Etain's sight he shone, seen but of her
And of the stranger bard who cried: "A God!
Behold a God! and kneeled, hiding his face
Within his mantle. From the Queen's hand fell
The brooch of beaten gold, guerdon of song,
And from her lips one word rang in all ears
"Midhir!" thus may a dying warrior's voice
Cry to the heedless winds the name of one
Lost by the thrust of death for ever. Silent,
Midhir, whom mortals in their fear have named
Midhir the Terrible, looked one moment's space
Upon Etain and passed. Even so the sun
Sends one red sudden flame across the world
Kindling again some ruined city's pride
And sinks to the unknown. Then her pale lips
Cried "Midhir!" and again "Midhir!" but the tide
Of past eternities broke through the bonds
Of time and death like the resistless sea
And 'neath its waves her spirit failed and sank.
Towards her dún she turned, stumbling and blind,
As one scorched by the forked flame of the storm,

PART III.

THE WOOD OF RATH TUATH.

The twilight of the slow year deepened and
passed
To-night, whence dawn and spring broke forth in gold,
And lo ! a king's robe, summer lay outspread.
But ere the wild heart of the autumn flamed
On ranach-covered hills and rowan trees,
Within the silence of a wood Etain
Had sought a refuge from unfriendly eyes ;
For tempests of immeasurable desire
And stormy flashes of unearthly joy
Swept through her soul, and fearing the Unknown
That with so slight a breath might wreck their
world,
Men shrank from her, and the contemptuous blame
Wherewith they sought to cover up their fear
Smote pitilessly on her till she fled.

There among trees that like herself were bound

Whose passionate souls went forth upon the winds,
Whose moods like waves of some unfathomed sea
Suddenly broke in storm, suddenly fell
To a hushed peace, she dwelt and round her soul
The great unhuman passion of the hills
Stood like a flaming barrier where through
No wounding thought of alien human love
Or human fear might pierce. But at her side
Eochaid the Ard-Ri watched and strove with blind
Despairing heart to shield her from some doom
Whose footsteps echoed through his dreams, for he
Had joyously forsaken his great dún
Thinking within the stillness he might find
Some respite from his dread, some hidden hope.

No days when all the sweetness of the earth
As in a cup brimmed for the thirst of the sun
Brought peace or slaking of desire unto Etain.
Nay, for the sun struck spears of living gold
Into her breast, searching out dark wild pangs
Of life forgotten and fettered, thrust from sight,
Now loosened like torrents freed by the breath of
spring

Breaking and laying waste. Thus the whole earth
Mocked with its peace her peace-forsaken heart.
But when the great winds broke wave upon wave
Upon the forest, wakening in tumult and cries
The mighty life of the branches, then with the
storm

Battling as an eagle wind-borne her spirit rose
Baffled, exultant, drunken with strife and freed.
And when nights lingered and the sun no more
Passed king-like through the steep unclouded skies
And all life drooped, and hidden in darkness slept
Within the earth's deep bosom, some voice she
heard

Some promise and some cry within the storm
That came from a far place beyond the world
Wakening a wild swift hope, that with the hush
Died into hopelessness and silent grief
When all the tumult of the forest ceased.

Low burned the fires of autumn when one eve
Beneath bare forest boughs, storm-writhen, passed
Etain the Ard-Rioghan. Strange laughter rose
Unbidden to her lips as the fierce storm

Raged through the forest and snatches of strange
songs

And unknown words were borne unto the King
Where stricken with deep fear he stood apart.
At last near him she paused and cried : " Behold !
The Horses of the Hosting Sidhe, white manes
And flashing hooves, riders that smite the whirlwind !
Hark how their voices shout from storm to storm
Golden, triumphant, as their horses plunge
Trampling the winds through all the empty skies
And over the wide world. But I—I scorn
These skies whose limit the proud Gods have laid,
These winds bound to the earth, these weakling
storms

Whose utmost raging may not rend the world
And cast it to the night of starless skies.
I know a passion that no bonds can hold,
More bitter than the sea, fierce as the wind
That breaks the worlds, limitless as desire,
Unsatisfied for ever and unquenched
While Time is born and fades and the Gods die.
Midhir, O Midhir, loosen me from life ! "

Even upon that word the skies were riven
And through the forest stormed a wind of flame
And in that wind stood Midhir crying aloud :
“Come O beloved! The shadow of Fate’s wing
Passes o’er other skies and thou art free.”

But ere she reached to him the Ard-Ri stood—
Half-blinded, shaken, overwhelmed with dread—
Dividing them, and held her in great arms
Scarred with the spears of twice a hundred wars,
Crying: “Etain! stay with me O Etain!”
A moment with vain, passionate hands she strove,
But when she marked the high heroic will
That in its weakness challenged the Unknown
Flaring within his eyes—a beacon set
Amid the triumphing waves of utter loss,
The bitter spears of pity slew her wrath
And her desire and all her joy grew chill
With the grey shades of unevaded doom,
Until she spoke: “Dost thou indeed desire
To lengthen out my days whereof thou knowest
The pain?” But holding her as one who clings
Unto his life he cried: “Stay, O Etain,

Have pity, leave me not." Then she: "Wouldst thou

Have joy in one, bound to these prison bars
And tortured with vain longings?" Then he cried
Lifting his kingly eyes wherein the power
Of wide unquestioned rule shone as the day:
"Tell me all thy desire and I will send
Beyond the moorings of the winds, no thought
Of thine shall dwell unsatisfied, no swords
Of heroes and no far unconquered kings
May hold thy wish from thee, but leave me not
For all my life is thine. Thy light-breathed wish
Shall be a storm to which all Eire yields,
Only forsake me not, and thou shalt have
All that thy heart and uttermost thought can hold."

On him she turned her deep eyes lit with scorn
Clouded with pity. "Loosen me," she said,
"And hear my asking, Ard-Ri of all Eirinn.
I do desire upon the meteor's flame
To sit enthroned and outspeed all the stars,
To dwell in the white radiance, shadowless
Of all decay, where infinite Beauty is,

To know Love limitless, unchanged, immortal.
I do desire the flaming Wind of Life
To lift me past the limits of desire
To hurl me past all height, beyond all depth
Beyond all life, beyond the waste of death
Into the Dark and Flame of Life and Death
——Nay I would be myself that Flame, that Dark,
I would be Life, Death, Beauty, Power, Love, All.
Canst thou give this ?” And he : “ Is it for this,
These shadows blown upon some wind of dream,
These strange imaginings of a sick heart,
That thou wouldst leave me desolate ?” And she
Half angered and half sorrowful replied :
“ Thus unto thee all my most secret thoughts
Are empty shadows and sick fantasies !
Behold thy thoughts have thrust me from thy side.”
But he : “ Behold I cast away my thoughts.
Only stay with me.” Then she cried : “ O King,
Within one mighty current of that Tide
Whose will is doom we twain were cast : long since
I cried unheard for pity when it drew
My soul down to this life to be thy woe,

And vainly strivest thou. No whisper falls
Between the stars why I was doomed to take
This mortal guise, nor why thy life was joined
And thy love given to me, not of thy race ;
And naught avails us. Lo ! the tide that swept
My life to thine bears now my life from thee,
And that strange beauty thou hast loved in me
Doth part us now." Then cried he : " None shall
part,

None rend thee from me ! By my love I won
And by my love I hold thee 'gainst all powers
Be they of Love or Hate." " Great though thy love,
Yet art thou mortal and Love's Lord thy foe."
Then gathering all his life answered the King :
" Greater my love than His, against His love
I hold thee," but terror-stricken she cried :
" Midhir, have mercy on him, slay him not !"
Then Midhir looked at him and moved one pace,
And in the King's eyes all the world was hidden
And crashed together in white light and fire.
The sweetness of immortal ecstasy
Pierced through his soul and on the earth he sank

Lifeless with joy.

Low over him she bent
Sighing : " O great in love beyond thy race
Eochaid, farewell. When thou awakenest
For ever shall the sweetness of that Love
Thou didst defy dwell in thee, even a joy
And secret ecstasy no pain may cloud.
Thou who hast known the eyes of Love and lived."
So kissed and turned from him and cried :
" O Midhir, hasten ! Already change and fade
These earthly shadows and the great winds pass
That know the Land of Life. Take me, beloved."
Then as he touched her all her being changed
To flame, and in a storm of fiery wind
They vanished from all eyes save those who dwell
In the white radiance of their timeless land,
The Land of Life, the Land of Heart's Desire.



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